2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50



562 582 concurrently or sequentially, from his aunts' and nieces' generation levels as well as from his own: such co-wives would all attain the generation level of their husband by these marriages. It is this outlook on women that permits Badaga marriages even between differently ranked clans without any thought of hypergamy being advantageous or hypogamy reprehensible.

582 604 Marriage between cross-cousins is the ideal, but because a young man's spiritual guidance is the responsibility of the mother's brother his daughter is less preferable as a bride for that youth than the father's sister's daughter. The mother's brother, called a *guru*, has a distinctly superior status to his nephew's, yet as giver of a daughter in marriage he must occupy an inferior position in the eyes of the groom and the groom's parents. This is because the bride's father feels under some obligation to the family who will take away his daughter. As one old man explained the matter, the feeling is expressed in the newly emerging practice of offering gifts of some thousands of rupees to 'bribe' a youth into a marriage. The likelihood of role ambiguity in cases where a man marries his *guru's* daughter is avoided either by searching out a classificatory cross-cousin, or by choosing the daughter of a mother's brother other than the spiritual guide or by marrying a father's sister's daughter. (Only among the Toreas is marriage with a classificatory niece permissible: she is a father's brother's daughter's daughter.)

(518) (583) (184)

Role ambiguity may also affect the women in a household where a man has married his *guru's* daughter. In that situation the bride's aunt (her father's sister) is also her husband's mother. The bride, relying on her father's influence over his own sister, tends to quarrel more with her than in the alternative case where a man has married his father's sister's daughter: the latter should be more timid and controllable and thus more appreciated.

(518) (596)

582 583 628 A further reason for preferring marriage with a daughter of the father's sister is the need for reciprocity in bride-giving between exogamous villages. If a man marries his mother's brother's daughter, he is *taking* a girl from the same village, lineage and family whence his own father also *took* a wife. On the other hand a reciprocal relationship has been honoured, Badagas feel, when the youth *takes* his bride (the father's sister's daughter) from the same village, lineage and family to which his father's father *gave* a daughter in marriage. Since bride-giving is thought to be somewhat demeaning, this reciprocity allows the families to maintain their relative social standing.

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who fled from that situation and settled on the hills as Badagas (i.e., "northerners") came mainly from the agricultural Okkaliga caste in the Mysore Plain. What their social organization may have been there is obscure and irrelevant. It seems that the small groups of refugees, torn from their caste affiliations, were so fragmented that the basic social unit among them as settlers was the joint family, not the *jati* or caste. It is still the ideal residential unit.

Today we find no castes in Badaga society. These people live in a tribal milieu, surrounded by the indigenous Toda, Kota, Kurumba, and Iruḷa tribes, and they have become fairly tribe-like themselves. The community is divided into ten phratries which are mainly endogamous. Two of these are vegetarian; all are primarily agricultural. Each phratry is made up of a number of exogamous clans, anything from two to sixteen of them, and these clans are in turn segmented into quite a few exogamous lineages. As with the famed Nigerian case of the Tallensi, there are actually lineages within lineages, so that we may need to speak about maximal (*kuḍumbu*), major (*kutti*), minor (*kutti*), and minimal (*guppu*) lineages, even though not every clan currently has all four levels of lineage. Segments of the minimal lineages are in fact extended families, counting back for about five generations, and with most of their members still alive.

These larger social units have a complicated history and organization (detailed in Hockings 1980), and they will not be considered further in this present study. It is nonetheless relevant to mention how they fit into the residence pattern. The Badagas live in about 370 exclusively Badaga villages which are normally exogamous. Marriage is virilocal. Each village is thus the home of one or more patrilineages all belonging to one clan (and hence, one phratry). But with few exceptions a clan is not confined to a single village.

One particular village, Tu:ne:ri, was the first place to be settled, in the late 16th century, as a result of which its headman became the paramount chief. This position, like all Badaga headmanships, has descended patrilineally within the family. Every other village has its own headman, descended from the founder, and clusters of neighbouring villages form a commune around one particular village whose headman is also acknowledged to be the commune headman. Furthermore, the whole of the plateau area has been divided into four quarters, and one man is recognized as the regional headman in each quarter. At every one of the four levels of headmanship there is also a council, made up of inferior headmen (except in the case of the village council, which consists of lineage elders who work with the traditional village headman).

The society is relatively homogeneous in the sense that, although the ten phratries are ranked into a widely accepted hierarchy, all families were traditionally subsistence farmers of millet and all lived by essentially the same kinship rules. We will therefore be able to explore the meaning of these rules without constant reference to exceptions and alternatives found only in certain sectors of the society.

81 Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1982 AN50 Badaga AN50



121 the kinship system in the Badaga case as having developed as a means of assigning and transferring ownership of and rights in property, especially cattle and houses, but to a lesser extent land too. We must remember that [241] in the early days Badagas practised swidden agriculture (although strangely that is not mentioned in the early ballads), and the Nilgiri population density was so low that land really had no market value there and was very easy to come by.

233 Now, keeping a herd of buffaloes requires adequate grazing and certain other conditions. One is the presence of a number of active men, typically brothers, who will keep the herd together while grazing and fend off tigers [539] when possible. Women could not do this work: the epic poem *Ba:la Sevana* [462] ridicules the mother of the hero for trying to drive the family's herd out to graze with a stick in her hand. Both swidden and ordinary plough agriculture 241 also called for the combined efforts of several men (as well as a number of 416 women), and so here too Badagas found a good reason for cultivating their 596 fields as a joint family. Many still do so today. The point to be noted is that both the buffalo-herding and ox-ploughing and swidden cultivation were 182 economic conditions that favoured patrilocality, the joint family, and brother/sister exchange at marriage—this latter a preference which maintained a balance of manpower between two intermarrying families or settlements. If a youth married his FZD and her brother in turn married *his* 581 MBD, brother/sister exchange would result, the ideal of cross-cousin mar- 582 riage would be honoured, the two families involved would have asserted their 583 equality, and close relations would ensue between them. Where brother/ 586 sister exchange has occurred, divorce becomes rather more difficult because it places great strains on the other couple, those who are not getting divorced.

591 The girls in this system invariably go off to another village in marriage 881 at or shortly after menarche, where they will be needed to *(a)* do house-work 462 and look after small children; *(b)* do some sowing, weeding and reaping in the fields; and *(c)* raise a new generation of farmers and buffalo herdsmen. 602 In this married situation the birth of a son means that a woman has largely fulfilled all three of her obligations to the family she has joined—for on [885] marriage a Badaga girl relinquishes membership in her natal family, lineage, 562 and village, and joins those of her husband. Her membership in them is made [851] especially manifest when her husband dies and a son continues to support her in her husband's village; and when she too dies it is her husband's village and its headman who are responsible for conducting her funeral, with the collaboration of her husband's family.

562 The economic decision-making rests with the adult men: when to sow, what to plant in each kind of soil, when and where to move the cattle in search of new grazing, when to harvest, and, in former times, when to move 182 the swidden. These decisions call for accurate topographical knowledge, and it is thus both appropriate and necessary that the detailed local knowledge 562 which boys acquire in work and play should be put to good use when they 591

As in any society, the family among the Badagas does not show one kind of structure only. A sample of 420 Badagas of both sexes, in 1963, revealed the range of households indicated in Table 5. I equate "family" with "household" here because among Badagas the residential unit is equally a commensal unit of a kind that is always recognized to be a family. What this table emphasizes is that only about 15% of Badaga households are joint families, and only about 3% are polygynous, even though both of these types are acceptable, and indeed the former is considered the ideal. It is an ideal which cannot however be realised continuously over a long period of time. There is a natural cycle of growth, florescence, and decline in the Badaga family, a cycle whose stages are approximately the same as the sequence of the first eight household types listed in Table 5. Once a household contains several brothers with their wives and children, it usually becomes necessary for them to split up into a number of nuclear families occupying different homes because there is no longer enough physical space and cooking facilities for all of them in what is typically a three-roomed house. It is noteworthy that in 1963 only 4.3% of the respondents belonged to a full joint family in which both of the grandparents were still living. This fact should be viewed against the backdrop of Table 1, which indicates that 19% of the male sample had more than one owned house available to them. Where alternative housing is available within the family the joint residential unit, no longer a necessity, may cease to seem so virtuous or practicable to its members either.

TABLE 5

Badaga Household Structure

| | Respondents' households |
|---|---|
| **Nuclear family:** | |
| Living alone, or with spouse | 45.2% |
| Couple with children | 19.8% |
| Mother with unmarried children | 0.7% |
| Father with unmarried children | 13.3% |
| Sub-Total: | 79.0% |
| **Joint family:** | |
| Parents, sons, their wives and children | 4.3% |
| Mother, sons, their wives and children | 5.3% |
| Father, sons, their wives and children | 3.6% |
| Several siblings with spouses and their children | 2.1% |
| Sub-Total: | 15.5% |
| **Polygynous family:** | 2.9% |
| **Other, supplemented nuclear or joint families:** | 2.6% |
| | (N=420) |

8: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1982 AW50 Badaga AW50



592 The situation among Badaga joint families is one in which these families break up early, typically as soon as the patriarch has died. It accords well with the all-India picture that Kolenda (1967: 172-180) has offered, wherein joint families that break up quickly are a phenomenon that is correlated with a high incidence of divorce and the custom of paying bridewealth: both are characteristic of Badaga society. From Table 5 it can be seen that, while 13.4% of respondents were living in joint families with one or both parents still alive in 1963, only 2.1% were then living in joint families consisting of several brothers with their wives and children. Clearly this latter residential pattern at the present time represents a difficult compromise with an ideal that is traditional but hardly still viable. Younger Badaga men now prefer to live in nuclear units, and to develop their careers or farming pursuits independently of their brothers. In that way income differentials and the sharing of a common household kitty will not have the potential for generating quarrels within the joint family that they did. The family that pays together, stays together—unwillingly though.

(578)
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